United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General recommends rapid deployment of UNAMIR II, with at least 5,500 troops and six-month mandate, to tackle humanitarian crisis in Rwanda; Mission would provide security for relief operations and displaced persons.

+ Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend ONUSAL mandate for six months to continue to verify compliance with El Salvador Peace Accords.

+ Five Nepalese UNOSOM II troops killed, in confrontation with gunmen in southern Mogadishu; sixth peace-keeper kidnapped from hospital.

+ Secretary-General, in letter to Security Council, says United Nations Compensation Commission is facing financial emergency; urges Council to consider facilitating transfer of Iraq's oil-related frozen assets to Compensation Fund.

+ UNHCR appeals to warring sides in Yemen to allow a relief convoy to reach Somalis in Al Koud refugee camp.

+ Security Council approves appointment of three military advisers to assist Secretary-General's Representative in Cambodia.

+ UNDCP to host International NGO Conference on global drug problem in New York from 18 to 20 May.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council expand the mandate and strength of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda to help alleviate the country's humanitarian crisis. In a report dated 13 May, he said the Mission, to be known as UNAMIR II, would have to be "credible, well-armed and highly mobile", and would need at least 5,500 troops, including 5 infantry battalions. It would have an initial mandate of 6 months, subject to review by the Council. He did not envisage a need for enforcement action, saying the Mission would depend primarily on deterrence to

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carry out its tasks. However, it might have to take action to defend itself or persons under its protection.

The Secretary-General said UNAMIR II would provide security for humanitarian organizations, and establish sites where displaced people could be protected. He welcomed a proposal that such sites be set up near Rwanda's borders with Burundi and Tanzania, but stressed that a similar effort was needed in the country's interior, where five times as many people were in need. UNAMIR II would also monitor border crossing points and the deployment of the parties to the conflict. He highlighted the importance of Kigali airport, and said it should be designated a neutral zone under the United Nations control.

The Secretary-General said UNAMIR II would be under the overall control of his Special Representative, while the Force Commander would be responsible for its military component. The Mission would cost an estimated $115 million for the initial six months. He stressed that the crisis in Rwanda must be solved through implementation of the Arusha Peace Accord, but said a cease-fire was urgently needed in the meantime. The Secretary-General also stressed that the international community could not ignore the atrocious effects of the conflict on innocent civilians, and urged that UNAMIR II be deployed without delay.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) be extended for six months until 30 November. In a report to the Security Council dated 11 May, he said ONUSAL should continue to verify compliance with outstanding provisions of the El Salvador Peace Accords. The Mission's size would be reduced according to how quickly those provisions were implemented.

The Secretary-General urged the Salvadorean parties to meet their remaining commitments without delay, and identified four areas needing urgent attention. The civilian character of the National Civil Police must be enhanced, and the National Police demobilized by the end of the year. The Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) must also approve any transfer of personnel from the National Police to the Civil Police. He said the pressing problem of human settlements must be solved, and stressed that people entitled to land under the land transfer programme must have access to agricultural credit and technical aid in time for the planting season. He appealed to the international community for continued financial support for peace-related programmes in El Salvador.

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Five Nepalese peace-keepers serving with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) were killed today after their vehicle was stopped by "armed elements" in southern Mogadishu, according to a spokesman for the

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Organization. A sixth Nepalese peace-keeper wounded in the ambush was later kidnapped from the hospital where he was being treated and is still unaccounted for.

Meanwhile, there has been a big decrease in the number of cholera cases in Somalia, despite incidences of the disease in the northwest of the country. The spokesman attributed the decrease to improved medical facilities, but stressed that it was important for the Somali public to be aware of the health hazard cholera still posed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali has expressed concern about the "financial emergency" facing the United Nations Compensation Commission after three years of intensive work. In a letter to the Security Council dated 13 May, he said the Commission had sufficient funds to pay some $4 million in compensation awards likely to be approved this month, but nothing to cover awards of over $200 million expected later in the year.

The Secretary-General noted that Iraq had exported substantial volumes of oil which had not been paid for before Security Council sanctions against it took effect in August 1990. He also noted that 30 per cent of Iraqi oil-related funds deposited to an escrow account was to be designated for the Compensation Fund. He urged the Council to consider acting swiftly to facilitate the transfer to the Compensation Fund of Iraqi oil-related frozen funds or proceeds from oil sales. That would allow the Compensation Commission to give the victims of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait the quick and effective justice it had been mandated to provide.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has appealed to the warring sides in Yemen to allow a convoy of emergency relief supplies to reach Somalis trapped in the Al Koud refugee camp. The convoy, which was scheduled to leave Aden today, will have to cross the front line one kilometre from the camp. A joint UNHCR-International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) team which reached the camp on Saturday was told 175 refugees had been killed and an unknown number wounded since the fighting began in early May.

A UNHCR representative said the camp's remaining 1,500 residents had little or no water, food or medical supplies. The agency was today considering evacuating those people, as well as 4,500 refugees who had fled into the surrounding countryside.

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The Security Council has welcomed Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's intention to appoint three military personnel to advise his Representative in Cambodia, Benny Widyono. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 13 May, Council President Ibrahim Gambari (Nigeria) noted that the mandate of the United Nations Military Liaison Team (UNMLT)

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would expire on 15 May. The three advisers would help Mr. Widyono to fulfil his mandate, in accordance with the spirit and principles of the Paris Agreements.

In a letter to the Council dated 6 May, the Secretary-General recalled that the Cambodian Government had asked for an extension of UNMLT's mandate for six months. In proposing the appointment of the military advisers, he said that that the presence of United Nations personnel in Cambodia contributed to a sense of security among the country's people.

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Some 200 non-governmental organizations from Canada, the English speaking Caribbean and the United States will meet in New York from 18 to 20 May to discuss ways to mobilize civil society in the fight against drug abuse. The International NGO Conference on "Involving communities in the global drug problem" will be held under the auspices of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). It will open at Headquarters, and will then meet at the Hotel Intercontinental in Manhattan.

The Conference will seek to enhance the involvement of NGOs in activities to reduce drug demand, and to widen awareness of drug issues. It is part of a number of regional consultations being held to develop an international NGO strategy for the 1994 World Forum on the Role of NGOs in Drug Demand Reduction. The Forum, to be organized by the UNDCP, will take place next December in Bangkok.

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